

**To:** CN=Ayn Schmit/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Martin  
 Hestmark/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Jim Martin/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Dominic  
 Digiulio/OU=ADA/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Dayna  
 Gibbons/OU=DC/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Gregory  
 Oberley/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Paula Smith/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Sandy  
 Fells/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Lisa McClain-  
 Vanderpool/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Matthew  
 Allen/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Patricia  
 Courtney/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Howard Cantor/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA;CN=Kimi  
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 Matsumoto/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA[]

**Cc:** []

**Bcc:** []

**From:** CN=Richard Mylott/OU=R8/O=USEPA/C=US

**Sent:** Thur 10/11/2012 2:50:18 PM

**Subject:** Casper Star Tribune: EPA extends Pavillion data comment deadline

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[By ADAM VOGUE Casper Star-Tribune](#)

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EPA extends Pavillion data comment deadline

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8 hours ago • By ADAM VOGUE Casper Star-Tribune

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CASPER, Wyo. -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will allow another three months for public comment on controversial data from well testing near Pavillion, an agency representative announced Wednesday.

The deadline for comments regarding testing data taken from a monitoring well in the Encana-owned Pavillion gas field in central Wyoming was set to expire next week. The data were released in late September.

Instead, the agency will take comments until Jan. 15, with a peer review of the data expected to follow. Martin Hestmark, a representative of the EPA's regional office, told members of the Pavillion Working Group of the change at a meeting Wednesday in Riverton.

The agency said in a statement that it decided to extend the comment period in order "to give stakeholders sufficient time to consider all data" related to the groundwater investigation.

Hestmark made the announcement early in the meeting, which also featured discussion about the recently released test data and sampling methodology in the area.

The postponement is the second in a year by the agency.

The EPA first drilled two wells to test whether the groundwater had been contaminated in the area in 2010. The agency released a draft report of the results — which tentatively implicated the oil and gas industry for area groundwater contamination — late last year.

The agency called for nominations to a peer review board in January and invited comment on the draft report the next month.

But the EPA's findings and methodology were disputed.

Industry and state officials were quick to criticize the report. Encana said it was "rushed." Gov. Matt Mead pledged state funding to re-test the wells.

By March, the agency extended the comment deadline. Soon after, the U.S. Geological Survey re-tested the wells in cooperation with the state and the EPA.

One point of contention is that the agency shouldn't have tested the second of two wells, which detractors said had too low a flow rate to offer effective results.

The USGS also opted not to test the second well.

Warren Day, a USGS representative, said at Wednesday's meeting that the agency could have tested the low-flowing well but chose not to because it would have taken too long and was "beyond the original scope agreed to with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality."

Some at the meeting also questioned the EPA's effectiveness in drilling the wells.

Dominic DiGiulio, a ground water researcher for the agency, told the group that the agency's second well was erroneously logged as being made from stainless steel and reaching a depth of 980 feet. The actual well casing is made from thread and couple steel and actually reaches 989 feet.

Encana representative David Stewart said the agency's oversight was troubling.

"I wonder what else is wrong, what else should be disclosed," he said.

A camera snaked to the bottom of the well showed that a screen in the well is partially obstructed, but DiGiulio said testing showed that the obstruction was "corrosion material" that wouldn't impact test results, continuing the agency's ongoing assertion that the data from the second well can be used.

"Low yield is not a justification to preclude sampling or disregard sampling results from a well," DiGiulio said.

The group didn't set a date for its next meeting, but it is expected to meet soon in Casper to review wellbore integrity data collected from wells in the field.

State DEQ Director John Corra said he expects the peer review session to take place in January. He said the group is unlikely to meet until after the review takes place.

"I get the sense that more work needs to be done in that arena," he said.

Some Pavillion-area residents at the meeting expressed frustration with the data and lack of closure.

"In the last 15-20 minutes, I've heard words like usually, possibly and maybe," said Steve Hugus, a farmer who lives near the gas field. "How valid is the information we have?"

DiGiulio said that it's hard to draw unflappable solutions from any data.

"With any kind of science, there's always some uncertainty," he said. "We have a lot of data. It's impossible to say anything with 100 percent certainty."

Read more: [http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/epa-extends-pavillion-data-comment-deadline/article\\_b2d6bd4a-00c2-5753-856f-237ff0ee0552.html#ixzz290B9uJIK](http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/epa-extends-pavillion-data-comment-deadline/article_b2d6bd4a-00c2-5753-856f-237ff0ee0552.html#ixzz290B9uJIK)

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